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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8638

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1830

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000186

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EUR FOR PEKALA, EUR/NCE FOR GARBER AND FICHTE, EUR/PRA FOR FRIEDT AND AZEVEDO, NSC FOR HAYWARD AND STERLING, OSD FOR IARROBINO AND SADOWSKA, USNATO FOR SHEEHAN AND MALONEY, MDA FOR LEHNER AND JENKINS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV MASS MARR EZ

SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC/MISSILE DEFENSE: RESPONDING TO RUSSIAN THREATS

REF: STATE 21640

Classified By: ADCM Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) As part of the ongoing dialogue with the Czech Republic on missile defense, both Washington and Embassy officials have briefed senior levels of the Czech government and opposition about U.S.-Russian consultations on missile defense and specifically the fact that the proposed MD system poses no threat to Russia. Since June of 2006 U.S. officials have briefed this material to both the current and former Prime Ministers, Defense Ministers and Foreign Ministers, as well as several other senior politicians and officials. All have accepted that Russia knows the facts and is milking the issue for political gain on other fronts, especially Russia's domestic political situation. Lower levels of the government, and select members of the press have also been briefed about the level of U.S.-Russia consultation. There is general acceptance that this system poses no threat to Russia.

¶12. (SBU) On February 21 Charge addressed a meeting of parliamentarians from the Foreign Affairs Committee, and members of the press, on the proposal to build a U.S. radar facility in the Czech Republic as part of the U.S. MD system. In the course of that briefing the Charge repeated the U.S. position that the system is not targeted against Russia, and reviewed the history of U.S.-Russian consultations on the topic. This appears to have quieted the Czech MPs, who had otherwise been very focused on exploring comments coming from Moscow.

GRABER